

# The Christian Freeman.

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DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

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## THE LAST OF THE SMITHFIELD MARTYRS.

SMITHFIELD, now the place of busy trade, is for ever sanctified by the names of those brave martyrs of religious truth who were more willing to die there than to live an insincere life. It has recently been mooted that a monument ought to be reared to the memory of those noble confessors whose bodies were burnt to ashes on this ever memorable ground. When that time comes the Unitarians of Great Britain must contribute their share, that the names of those who have been martyred on this spot for asserting the Unitarian faith may not be omitted from the obelisk. We believe the last sufferer for religious truth, and the firm and manly adherence to the right of declaring openly his honest thought—the last of the Smithfield martyrs—was Bartholomew Legate, a Unitarian. We learn from the history of his life, written even by his enemies, that he was a man of fine and commanding appearance. "Person comely, complexion black; then about forty years of age. Of a bold spirit, confident carriage, fluent tongue, excellently skilled in the Scriptures, and of a very unblameable life." He must have been a man of some position in society as well, for he was more than once summoned to appear before the bishops at St. Paul's, and committed to prison for his heresy; and then again released, hoping he would hold his tongue. We honour the first apostles who were not intimidated by a dungeon or death from openly preaching when they felt truth and God commanded them; nor can we withhold our admiration of Legate, who after his release from gaol, and with the threat of being burned to ashes, manfully again lifting up his voice to persuade the people to believe in the truths of Scrip-

ture and not in the creeds of even the Protestant Church. To Newgate he was dragged, and the self-confident king James I., who was mighty fond of a theological argument, visited him in prison several times, that he might have the honour of converting this Unitarian to the Trinitarian faith. A dangerous opponent, a king, for we know that there are many who cannot resist the social position of persons much inferior to a sovereign. Legate withstood both the kingly position and the King's arguments. Both were well versed in Scripture, and the Subject proved every time more than a match at argument for his Royal Master. On one of the visits of his Majesty, the King expected that he would, by a little cunning, gain a confession of Christ's Deity from the prisoner by asking him about praying to Jesus Christ—for some of the early Unitarians, as taught by Socinus, did offer prayer to Christ. This was one of the points in which the Socinians we think were really inconsistent; for if Christ, as they taught, was not God, and that prayer and praise were only to be addressed, as commanded by Christ, to the Father, the practice of praying to Christ was not in harmony with true Unitarianism. No doubt King James saw this when he proposed his question to Legate about prayer to Christ. Had Legate answered the King, that he prayed to Christ, no doubt his Majesty would then have triumphed over him in this weak point, and proceeded to show that none but God ought to be the object of prayer. But Legate said, much to the King's surprise, that in former years, before he came to the knowledge of the true doctrines of Christianity, that then he did pray to Christ in the days of his ignorance, but he had not done so for the last seven years. This reply so disconcerted the King and ruffled his temper,



that he spurned Legate from him with his foot, and said, "Away! base fellow! It shall never be said that one stayeth in my presence who hath never prayed to the Saviour for seven years together."

The historian Fuller gives us some account of the martyrdom of Legate, on the 18th of March, 1612, about the middle of the day, with an immense concourse of people to witness this scandalous sight. He says, "Never did a scare-fire at midnight summon more hands to quench it than this at noonday did eyes to behold it. At last, refusing all mercy, he was burnt to ashes. And so we leave him, the first that for a long time suffered death in that manner. And, O that he might be the last to deserve it!" Legate was not the last, as we well know, to openly preach the doctrine for which he suffered, but we believe he was the last that was burnt at the stake for those doctrines.

#### NATURE'S SMILES.

THE fair smile of morning,  
The glory of noon,  
The bright stars adorning  
The path of the moon:  
The mist-covered mountain,  
The valley and plain,  
The lake and the fountain,  
The river and main;  
Their magic combining,  
Illume and control  
The care and repining  
That darken the soul.

The timid spring stealing  
Through light and perfume,  
The summer's revealing  
Of beauty and bloom,  
The rich autumn glowing  
With fruit treasures crowned,  
The pale winter throwing  
His snow wreaths around—  
All widely diffusing  
A charm on the earth,  
Wake loftier musing  
And holier mirth.

There is not a sorrow  
That hath not a balm  
From nature to borrow,  
In tempest or calm;  
There is not a season,  
There is not a scene,  
But fancy and reason  
May gaze on serene,  
And own its possessing  
A zest for the glad,  
A solace and blessing  
To comfort the sad.

#### FLOY'S CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY MINNIE WILLIS BANES.

"MAMMA," said little Floy Ingless, looking out at the falling snow, "are you not glad to think Christmas is almost here? I wish, mamma," and the wish burned bright and vivid in her cheeks and looked earnestly out of her dark grey eyes—"I wish *we* could have a tree."

Mrs. Ingless looked up from her book in some surprise, and asked, coldly: "What puts such foolish ideas in your head, Floy? Doesn't your papa always buy you some handsome present?"

Floy left the window, and came and stood by her mother. She did not lean against, or touch her, for fear of soiling the rich cluny collar. But she put her little white hands together in the earnestness of her plea, and exclaimed: "Oh, mamma, do let us have a tree."

"I don't know, Florence. I can't see the propriety of making so much fuss over any one particular day. Besides all that, it takes children's minds from their studies for so long a time, and unfits them for everything else. How are you getting on with your French lessons, Floy?"

"Oh, very well, mamma," her face dropping its bright, eager look. "M. Devereaux says my accent is pure as a born Parisian's; but I don't like my master much."

"And why, pray? Why don't you like him?"

"I cannot tell, mamma. He seems to know nothing but bowing and using his feet. Papa calls it 'twaddle.'"

"Your papa's tastes are not of the refined nature I could desire. He does not consider the cultivation of the graces essential; but, believe me, Florence, they hold the key which opens the door of happiness to the young."

Floy sunk down on an ottoman at her mother's feet, and looking up in her face, said earnestly: "Papa is very different. He says to me often, with such a sad, look in his eyes: 'Remember, Floy, to keep your heart good and pure whatever becomes of French.'"

Left alone, Mrs. Ingless did not return to her reading. She drew her deep-cushioned chair nearer to the window. All was bright, happy, and entrancing. All but she seemed to feel that it was near



the merry, merry Christmas. "Christmas is coming!" chimed the shaking bells—"Christmas is coming!" echoed the glad some hearts. Floy's face rose before her mother's mental vision in mute reproach.

Then again the scene brought to memory many things long ago past. Fourteen years! could it be so long? To think of that first night—that merry Christmas eve, when she met him in the midst of a youthful crowd that had gathered, by invitation, in her father's house in honour of the great occasion—it seemed but a day.

And in a year—on the next Christmas eve, there was a newly-made bride in the same little parlour—as happy a bride as the Yule log ever crackled for or the Christmas tapers lit to the sacred marriage couch. That was thirteen years ago—thirteen years. Belle Ingless sighed, and the snow kept whirling, falling, white and soft as were those bridal robes, now, alas! yellowed with time, as, was, perhaps, also the pure white heart. And, as the snow still fell, her thoughts resumed the form of reverie, and a quiet little home rose up before her. Belle Ingless, thirteen years ago, thought this a Paradise. Belle Ingless, now, gave a half sigh to that Paradise Lost.

Shortly before the birth of little Floy, Adrian Ingless' father died, and the two children, Adrian and his sister, inherited equal shares of an almost fabulous fortune. After Mr. Ingless' death both brother and sister were enabled to change their style of living, and it was then that the dormant ambition in Belle Ingless' life awoke to poison it. The wealth that should have been subservient to her seemed to become her task-master. The desire to be admired, to be perfect in all social conventions, to lead in all styles—to queen it royally in her little kingdom, hurried her into countless extravagances, made her neglectful of many wifely and motherly duties, blinded her to the loss of what she was throwing away, the treasure, which, perhaps, might never be regained. As little Floy grew, in the care of hirelings, she was brought once in the forenoon and once in the afternoon to be inspected by her lady mother. Little Floy was dressed in the finest of fabrics, her baby neck and arms laden with gold and jewels. As soon as she was old enough—in fact, earlier than

judicious mothers would deem advisable—the little girl's education, or, rather, the "cramming" of her mind, was begun. The father remonstrated strongly, but vainly; and, at length, ceased to object, looking on in mute grief at the transformation wealth and unlimited ambition had wrought in his dearly loved wife, and the injury it was inflicting upon their only child. Still he hoped against hope for a change, and went about a weary, dispirited man. Often and often, in the words of one of old, his spirit implored the gift of "neither poverty nor riches," or that a better understanding of using them rightly might dawn upon his companion's mind. Gradually, husband and wife drew further and further apart. There were many congenial points between the two which, if cultivated, would have made companionship blissful to them, but they were suffered—these dewdrops of feeling—to congeal into ice. Belle Ingless did not find this life happy, but she lacked light to lead her back into the truer path, and so groped on in the cold and dark, trying to find happiness in the hollow mockeries of the things of the hour, which straightway perish.

Under such influence one would have thought Floy Ingless would be ruined. But her father was her comforter as she was his. He always endeavoured, without casting disrespect upon her mother's opinion, to make her understand that these things, however desirable in themselves, if made the chief aim of being, and perverted from their use, were sources of discomfort and misery, dwarfing the nobler stature of the soul, and blunting the most beautiful sympathies of the heart; that men and women were made for better things, the effects of which were eternal in the benefit and happiness they conferred. But, as was inevitable, under such different tuition the child became painfully precocious in both mind and body. She could chatter French, and dance with the grace of a fairy. Her little life had been one constant endeavour—no play, no rest, no romping, such as other children delight in. Her face was dreamy and spiritual. Her dark eyes were full of wishful thought, her cheeks pale and wan, or burning with restless fire. A slim, little, hollow-chested form that often gave her father the almost maddening thought that it would not take much more to wear it out.



After a while Mrs. Ingless went up to her room, put herself into a rich walking costume, and went out into the glittering street. A few moments' walk brought her to the home of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Ballard. The children ran to greet and kiss "Aunt Belle," and take off her wrappings, all wanting to tell at the same time about the wonderful Christmas tree in course of preparation, and the locked drawers in mamma's bureau, and if cousin Floy was going to have one, too. "See, Auntie," said little Mary Ballard, "here is a pair of white wool hose I knitted myself for Floy." "And, here," said Kate, "is a new high-necked frock mamma has just finished for her." Mrs. Ingless looked at her sister-in-law, who smiled and said: "Yes, dear Belle, I meant it for a suggestion. I fear you do not dress little Floy warmly enough, and hope it will not displease you if I say so."

Belle shook her head. "You are very kind," she said, turning to hide a tear which surprised her. "If I thought it would benefit her health I should certainly make a change in her dress. For some reason, Floy is low spirited." The little pleading face came once more before the mother's memory, this time awakening, in return, a passionate thrill of motherly love. "Tell me, Mary, what must I do for my little girl?"

Mrs. Ballard's heart gave a great throb. She and her brother had hoped and prayed many years for this hour. "My darlings," said she, turning to the children, "run to your play while I talk with Auntie." When the two were alone Mrs. Ballard began the unpleasant duty of answering her sister's question—unpleasant, because she knew not how her suggestions would be received. But, in the long talk which followed between the two, the purest, deepest depths of Belle Ingless' heart and soul, unsounded till now, felt the falling plummet of passionate wifely devotion and unselfish mother love, measuring the great waters that had, until now, been crusted with the ice of conventional folly. When they had done talking she turned her face to the wall and covered it with her hands. Afraid to witness her agony—the solemn sorrow of her awakening heart—Mary Ballard stole from the room and left her alone. A long time she sat there motionless, but when she rose to go homeward

she bore upon her face the high, triumphant look of a warrior who has not only disabled, but slain the enemy.

Little Floy, rocking drearily before the dying fire in the grate, felt herself caught up in a loving clasp that night, strained to her mother's heart, and kissed and wept over, till it awakened her wonder. And then her mother told her she might have her Christmas tree, and she need not study for a long, long time. "Oh, mamma, you are so good," cried Floy, and they mingled their tears together.

When at last Floy fell asleep no happier heart held sweeter fancies than hers, no pleasanter dreams visited the pillow of childhood anywhere. The mother turned away from her treasure with a half-sad heart. Something else remained to be done.

As Adrian Ingless sat reading by the shaded lamp in the handsome library, some one came softly and swiftly in. Before he knew it was Belle, she was on her knees besides his chair, wringing her hands, and wildly, confusedly, sobbing out her confession, her repentance, her new resolutions, begging him, for the sake of the old love, for the sake of their child, to forgive her. He snatched her up with a quick, glad cry, he rained his tears on her perfumed hair, he kissed her with a long drawn, trembling kiss, and the rewedding of those souls, more perfect than the first, was eternal. "The dead is alive, and the lost is found," said he, solemnly and tenderly.

Never dawned so bright a Christmas—never were hearts so happy at its approach. Wind or weather could not have darkened the inborn sunshine of Belle and Adrian Ingless' home. No tree was ever so perfect in shape or so emerald in shade as the cedar that had sprung up over night in the handsome parlour, laden with all the dainty wonders in which the heart of childhood delights. On its summit hung a spray of mistletoe, under which Adrian led his beautiful wife, and smiling at the lovely flush that went running with rosy feet across her face, gently kissed her lips.

And the little girl, who, with another month of over-study, would have died, leaving her mother to listen for ever to the whisperings of remorse, grew plump and rosy and healthy, and their hearts overflowed with thanksgiving to Him who is the giver of all good.



## HOW I BECAME A UNITARIAN.

WRITTEN IN MY EIGHTIETH YEAR.

WHEN I began, a little child, to think about God, I could not imagine how He could be one, and yet three, and was taught I must believe that this God of three people who were all of the same age, and were equal in power, and yet the second was the son of the first, and the third was as great and powerful as the first and second, and still that the clergyman did very seldom mention his name in the prayers, I rather pitied the Holy Ghost, as being neglected.

The name of *Ghost* rather puzzled me ; for I had heard the steps of ghosts, as the servant, of my grandmother who rented a large Elizabethan house, told me.

Sometimes I tried to believe that the three Gods were one and the same, lest I should offend God the Father, who seemed to be always watching for me to be naughty, and who kept a great angel with large dark wings, and had a large book, in which with a long pen he wrote down all my naughty words and even thoughts. This he would sometime read aloud to all the people in the world, and that God the Son, who was as old as his father, would sit on a high throne to listen, and would, if I were wicked, send me to a place where I should be kept burning for ever and ever. It was no wonder I did not love such a God. Yet this is not improbably the case with children, taught by ignorant, but well-meaning instructors. How different such a God from our loving Parent-God, whose religion is not a terrible one of dread !

I tried much to drive away these thoughts, and often succeeded ; for my heavenly Parent in his tender pity had given me a cheerful and even a merry heart.

As I grew towards womanhood I found too many studies and active duties to give much serious thought and time to examine the subject for myself. I had no access to books that I could trust as helps. The sermons of the State clergy were too long and too dull to be remembered or thought about after leaving the church and a chat with neighbours returning home. Then came months, and even years, of anxious care and attendance on invalid and aged parents, until, after their death, I was

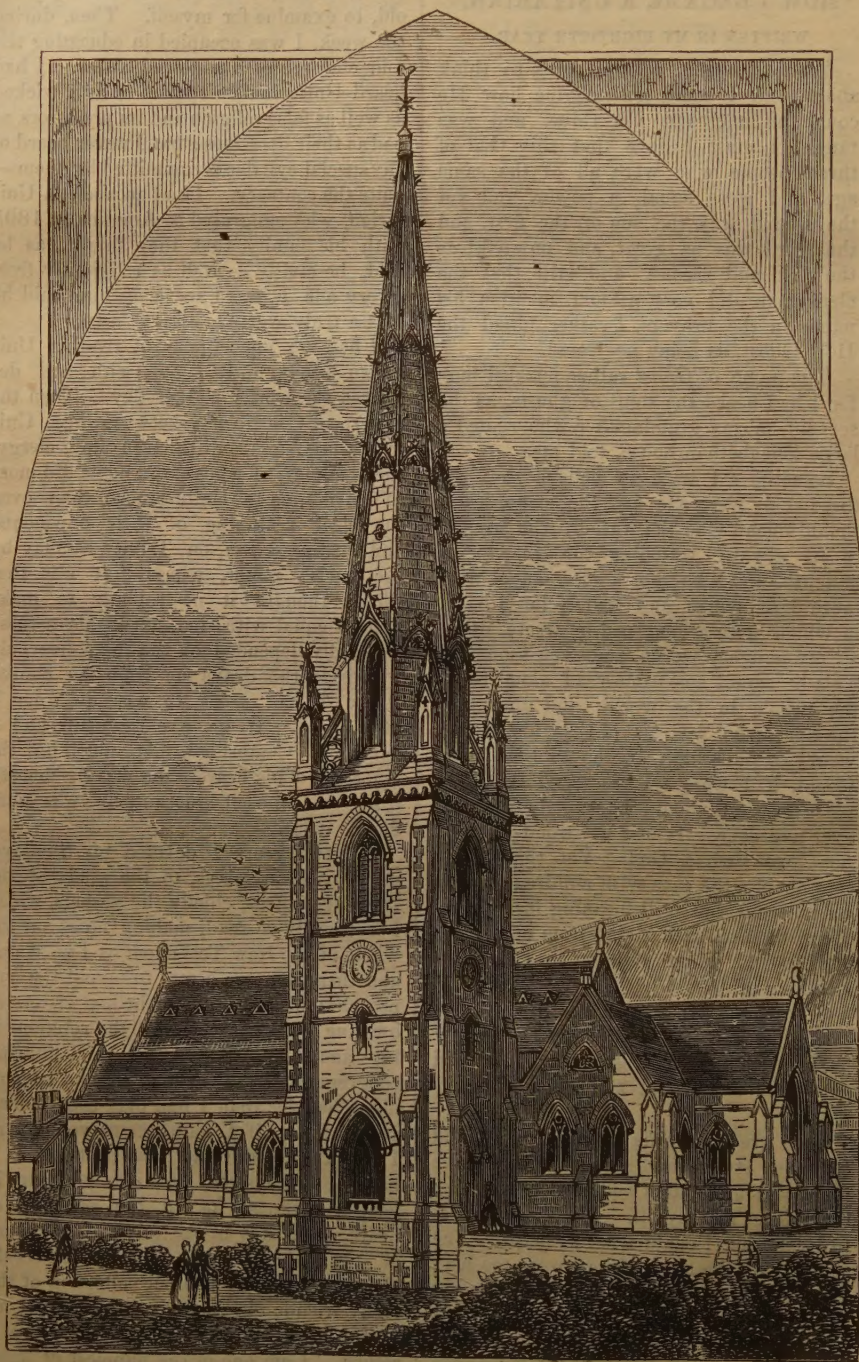
left at leisure, when I was about fifty years old, to examine for myself. Then, during the week, I was occupied in educating the four children of a widowed sister. I had heard Unitarianism spoken of as a wicked as well as false religion and its professors as bad as their doctrines ; but I never heard of any special evil deeds committed by them—quite the contrary. I had an uncle, a Unitarian, who emigrated to America in 1805 with his family, that they might, as he said, be civilly as well as religiously free. Every one I heard speak of him said he was a truly worthy, upright man.

I had no opportunity of reading Unitarian books until I met with and devoured the works of Priestley. Then the Liverpool Controversy between three Unitarian ministers and thirteen State clergy, the weakness of whose arguments did more to convert me to Unitarianism than even the clear reasoning of their opponents, and then a sermon on Trinity Sunday by the parish rector, whose text was that Christ thought it no robbery to make himself equal with God, but in his sermon he chiefly depended on the three heavenly witnesses, this drove me from the church where I had *tried* to worship from a little child. If he, a clergyman, and a fellow of Cambridge, depended on the ignorance of his hearers, he was dishonest ; if he was himself ignorant, he was unfit for his office.

For two years I devoted my Sundays, my only leisure days, to the study of the New Testament, chiefly the gospels, which I frequently re-read, making notes on the whole of the New Testament as I went on ; and then left my home to avoid the reproaches of my three orthodox sisters at quitting what they called "the religion of my ancestors," and joined a Unitarian congregation in my new home, and became much happier than I had ever been before. I even felt as if I had become younger as I felt a new life had dawned to me. I have never regretted this step whether in health, sickness, or in the presence of death, or in any of the trials of life, sure of the love of my gracious heavenly Parent, and blessed in the affection of the many friends He has given me, most of whom are Unitarians, and whose love I return. I am one of the happiest of aged women, even when suffering pain.

J A.





UNITARIAN CHURCH, TODMORDEN.



## UNITARIAN CHURCH, TODMORDEN.

TODMORDEN is a manufacturing town with a population of 20,000. It is situated in the midst of the lofty hill range which divides the counties of York and Lancaster, midway between Rochdale and Halifax, lying at the point of junction of three or four valleys, into the narrow gorges of which it extends its long-drawn streets. This church is well situated on an eminence overlooking the main street, and, with its lofty and graceful spire, forms a conspicuous object from every hill side, and the one prominent feature of the town. The tower is furnished with an illuminated clock, which is shortly to be fitted with chimes. Above the tower is a bell-chamber containing eight bells. We believe it is the only Dissenting church in England which ushers in the day of rest and the hour of worship with the sweet music of bells.

The nave of the spire is 200ft. from the ground; the church is 128ft. in its greatest length, and 46ft. in breadth. It stands in the midst of a beautiful enclosure of shrubs and lawn formed on the slope of the hill.

The interior of the church consists of a nave and two side aisles, with a deep chancel. The nave is separated from the aisles on either side by six pillars supporting seven arches. The shafts of these pillars are of Devonshire marble; their capitals of fine sandstone, very beautifully carved. On each side of the chancel is a chapel. The chapel on the north side is appropriated to the organ and vestry; that on the south side is a mortuary chapel. These chapels are separated from the chancel by two lofty arches, supported on clustered columns; their roofs are groined, and, together with the chancel, they are enriched with much beautiful carving. The chancel window is a large "five-light," window, with has been beautifully embellished. The three inner lights represent Christ at the well in conversation with the woman of Samaria; on the outer light to the left-hand is portrayed the story of the good Samaritan; on that to the right-hand, Christ blessing the little children; underneath are figures of angels bearing a scroll, and on the scroll, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father," &c. Over the principal entrance is a large and

elaborately - designed wheel - window of stained glass. The roof, seats, reading-desk, screens, &c., are of oak. The front is of marble, and is a gem of art; the lower portion of the pulpit is also of marble. Whether we regard the solidity of the material of which it is built, or the excellence of the workmanship, or the simplicity and beauty of the design, this church will compare with any in our country, and can probably be surpassed by none. It was built at the sole expense of the Messrs. Fielden. They have built it to bear witness to the power of a faith in Jesus Christ, "a faith which shall be unshackled by theological creeds or dogmas, but which shall hold fast the pure and simple doctrines which our Saviour himself sets forth in the Gospels." The church is associated with the memory of their father, the late John Fielden, Esq., who for some years was M.P. for Oldham, and to whose earnest advocacy, both in and out of Parliament, we greatly owe that Magna Charta of the manufacturing districts—the "Ten Hours' Bill."

The building was opened for public worship on the 7th of April, 1869.

The old chapel was built in 1824; it was the result of that missionary movement which sprung out of Joseph Cooke's expulsion from the Methodist body, in 1806, we named in a former number. Mr. Cooke laboured at Rochdale and Newchurch and Padiham, and active and thriving congregations in each of those towns testify to the earnestness of the man. He left behind him three labourers in the field, viz., James Wilkinson, James Taylor, and John Ashworth. These and their coadjutors preached occasionally at Todmorden, then but a small manufacturing village. It was not until the autumn of 1818 that some two or three working men of their following, hearing of the opening of the Clover-street chapel, Rochdale, walked over the hills to be present. The well-known missionary, Richard Wright, was the preacher, and he readily yielded to their request, and on the following Sunday week preached in Todmorden. He established a course of Sunday services. They were much talked of in the village, and John Fielden, little satisfied with the dogmatic teachings of the churches about him, attended them. He soon discovered himself to be in singular harmony of opinion



with the much condemned and greatly talked of heretics. Entering into the movement with his natural energy of character, he became its moving spirit, taught in the Sunday-school, and sometimes conducted the service in the chapel. It was mainly through his instrumentality that the old chapel was erected; and his sons, revering their father's memory, and anxious to promote that cause of free and undefiled religion which he ever had so much at heart, have, with a spirit of rare munificence, built this church, and transformed the old chapel into schoolrooms. The cause of free religion has not been one of continued success in Todmorden. Indeed, twenty years ago it seemed almost to have died out. Its minister was old and feeble, and the school and congregation would seldom exceed twenty. The Rev. Brooke Herford laboured here for three years, and effected a great revival. He was followed by the present minister, the Rev. Lindsey Taplin, who settled in Todmorden in 1856. The story of the cause from that time, if one of constant struggle and sometimes of very hard fighting, is also one of constant success. The fierce bigotry and prejudice of the people has been completely overcome. The Sunday-school has increased fourfold; and the minister numbers with pride amongst the most earnest and active members of his church those whom he remembers as its youthful scholars. The morning congregation at the church is very large. Long may this beautiful church serve to keep alive the remembrance of the hearty, intelligent, and Christian zeal of Mr. John Fielden, and of the munificence of his sons; and as long as it does so, may it be the home of an ever increasing family of faithful worshippers!

#### THE DUTY OF PROTESTANTS IN REFERENCE TO THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL.

THE Pope has summoned for this month a general council of the Church to meet in the ancient city of Rome to deliberate on the present aspect of ecclesiastical affairs, and to decide on the admission of certain dogmas into the list of articles of Catholic belief. There have only been a few such grand councils in the entire history of the Church.

To such an assembly it is impossible that Protestants can be indifferent. The

newspapers will have their special correspondents in the Eternal City, and we shall have graphic descriptions of the arrival of bishops and their suites from nearly every country of the habitable globe—from our own England and from isles in the Pacific, from the old Spain of Europe and the new Spains of America, from refined France and semi-savage Mexico. And then the grand Church of St. Peter's, with the imposing ceremonial opening—the Holy Father—venerable alike from his age, his personal character, and his high office—bestowing his apostolic benediction on the mighty assembly, on city and on world. And then the august deliberations—calm, slow, majestic—very unlike our keen parliamentary debates—no exciting divisions, no pairing of votes—only solemn ratifications; cogitating views; even divine honours to Mary; new assertions of Pontifical infallibility and temporal sovereignty; new claims of pre-eminence of the Roman Church. All this will enforce our interest and attention.

But more—indifference is not our duty. The interests of humanity are one. Whatever affects the well-being, the thoughts, the actions of man, should be of interest to all. We are our brother's keepers. We cannot escape from the ties which bind us each to the other. None so removed from us by distance, language, colour, or creed, but somehow, and through some channel, their joys will bring joy for us, their sorrows wring tears from our eyes, their right-thinking aid us to think aright, their wrong-thinking warp our thoughts awrong.

As fellow-Christians, we cannot be indifferent. The heaving of the mightiest mountain of the Christian range—majestic with the snows of the centuries upon it—must affect all the hills around it. To its heavings in the past do many of these hills owe their birth. The very name of the Roman Catholic Church carries our thoughts along the vista of history, back to the ancient world. Entwining itself with the declining days of the Roman empire—the division and ultimate breaking-up of this empire (when the clergy took the place of the Roman magistrates, and, in the words of Guizot, “prevented the world from falling a prey to mere brute force”)—through the dark ages—the conversion



and civilisation of our own British forefathers—the feudal times—the rise of chivalry—the crusades—the revival of learning, painting, sculpture, music, architecture—the old cathedrals and minsters of our own and other lands—all speak of Rome and the Catholic Church—pronounce it the grandest human institution of the past which yet survives on the earth. And independently of its historical claims, what claims on our attention has it from its present magnitude and position? The time has gone by (for ever, we hope and believe) when the fiat of the Church could dethrone kings, make war and peace, release subjects from their allegiance, imprison a Galileo for saying that the earth moved, or when the thunders of excommunication could plunge a nation into dark and hopeless despair. Still is it by far, and beyond all comparison, the grandest ecclesiastical fabric in the world—its adherents as numerous as in its most palmy days. To nearly 150 millions of human beings is it the religious director, the spiritual guide through life, and across the dark valley of death. And what is its future likely to be? We assume no prophetic mantle, but are almost inclined to be one with our historian, when he says that at the time in the far-distant future that the New Zealander may be sketching the ruins of St. Paul's from a broken arch of London Bridge, the old Roman Church may be still flourishing in greatness and splendour.

To the great fact, then, of this council of the Catholic Church, Protestants cannot be indifferent, and to profess to be so would only be make-believe. Neither can it be regarded by them in the same light as any other denominational meeting.

Were our Christian sympathy to extend so far, the feeling would not be reciprocated. The Catholic Church never fraternises—does not, indeed, recognise other religious bodies as churches at all. She is always aggressive—ever eager to win back what she has lost—keeping an inventory of all our old cathedrals as, *de jure*, her property still. Her clergy, free from family ties, wedded to her, making her extension, influence, and authority the paramount objects of their lives. And she is still the unchangeable Church. No dogma of the past, although it grew out of an age of gross ignorance and superstition, if once

stamped with the seal of the fisherman on the seven hills, but must be held for ever as infallibly and incontestably true. The truths of science and the common sense of mankind may have long since demonstrated its falsity, but scientific truth and common sense must go to the wall before Papal authority and tradition. There is no truce, no armistice with Rome. Her hatred of Protestantism is intense, active, ever watchful of opportunity. And in the spirit of mere self-protection, Protestantism must ever be counter watchful of and prepared against Rome.

Let us not be misunderstood. In taking as our grand Protestant stand-point freedom of religious faith, claiming the right to hold our own opinions, and to worship our Maker in the mode which our own conscience dictates, we must of course extend the same rights to others. No difference of faith must be any barrier to equal rights of citizenship. The Protestant and the Catholic, the Jew and the non-professor of any religious faith, being all one in social consideration and in the eyes of the law. But none the less is it as necessary now, as it was in the days of Martin Luther and John Knox, that the battle front of Protestantism should be boldly maintained. This great council must be looked on as one of war in an enemy's camp—as a council directed against our dearest and most hardly-won possessions—against our liberties, both civil and religious—against our free press, our open Bible, our literature—our achievements in science; as a council forging still stronger, more galling, and degrading fetters for so many millions of our fellow men.

Our Protestant duty, then, is neither indifference nor inactivity. Is it, then, counter demonstration? Are we to get up a Protestant congress or general assembly as big as possible, from which shall emanate Evangelical dogmas as counter-irritants to those of Rome? Simply impossible. We are so split up that such a heterogeneous assemblage could not hold together, or unite in any great course of action. Such a divided assembly would indeed be used as a weapon of attack by Rome—as a crushing argument in favour of her boasted unity. And more—it would stultify itself. Its very purpose would be anti-Protestant—Popish! For no number of men, however reverend, learned, or



devout, have any right to assume the prerogative of settling the creed of a single human being — of making their conscience the gauge of other men's. Of all the evil things connected with Popery not one of them—not Mary-worship, not saint or relic-homage, not confession or indulgence, not the belief in transubstantiation, absolution, or purgatory—can compare with this—that it demands that its votaries shall prostrate their very souls before its arrogant claims to infallibility. And the professing Protestant who takes his faith submissively from church or creed—from a thousand divines or from one pastor—is infidel to his principles, and voluntarily brands himself with the foulest mark of the beast.

"I trample upon the pride of Plato," sneered the ancient cynic, as with his muddy feet he besmeared the carpet of the more refined philosopher. "With greater pride," replied Plato; and it may be that one of our self-appointed Protestant champions, so anxious to beard the lion in his den, and to air his ecclesiastical Latin under the shadow of the Vatican, is just as great a Pope in his heart—as full of spiritual vanity and self-sufficiency—as the "Man of Sin" himself. We deny that this man, or any man, is our spiritual representative—Is to stand as a priestly mediator between our souls and the "Holy Father" in Rome—any more than between our soul and the Father of all souls in heaven. Here, in this ghostly realm of thought and spirit, every man is a priest and a king—standing erect in his divine right of citizenship—the fellow and equal of pope and bishop, of pastor and patriarch.

Protestants, then, are not, like the frog in the fable, to attempt to match the ox of Rome by swelling out into a big counter-council. What, then, remains? We ourselves remain. Every man, yea, every woman of us, is called upon by the voices of duty and of conscience to protest against spiritual despotism under every form—against every assumption, Popish or Protestant, of infallibility, priestly dominancy, and authority. The command, "Do the work of an evangelist," sounds in trumpet tones down through the ages as imperative to each one of us as to the apostles of old. Each one of us is to be within his path of life and sphere of duty a preacher of the divine Gospel of spiritual liberty and

equality in the living church, which is established not in Jerusalem, nor in this Roman or in any other mountain, but in the hearts of men. The Great Master, whose name we venture to assume, said, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." And it is this true spiritual worship, working in us to will and to do His good pleasure, which will be the noblest and grandest protest against a mode of worship the essence of which is dogma, ceremonialism, priestcraft, and priestly despotism. It is to its indwelling powers—not to its bulk or outward appearance—that the little leaven owes its virtue, and by which, by and by, it will leaven the whole lump.

We venture, then, to answer the question—"What is the duty of Protestants in reference to the forthcoming Ecumenical Council?" by saying—be yourselves what you profess to be—true Protestants. Hold fast by the faith for which your fathers laboured and witnessed a good confession—the freedom of the soul—the divine right of private judgment. As individuals, in our circle of society, and our circle of home—by voice and by pen, by parental instruction, and by personal example—let us prove our Protestantism to be still a living principle, and who shall fear for truth and freedom? The progress of knowledge, the experience of history, the treasure stores of literature, the best minds in the world of living men, the spirit of the age—all are with us, and against our antagonists. In this grand instinctive assertion of the soul, its freedom of conviction, its yearning for direct communion with its Author, without mediation of Church or priest, here is the Protestant high vantage ground. From this impregnable fortress he can smile at Popes and councils solemnly assuming infallibility, re-instituting old worn-out creeds and dogmas, or establishing new ones—can answer their fulminations against progress, their attacks on liberty of conscience, their arrogant demands for his soul's submission.

Tyrants! in vain ye trace the wizard ring,  
In vain ye limit mind's unwearied spring,  
What! can ye lay the winged wind's asleep,  
Arrest the rolling world, or chain the deep?  
No! the wild wave contemns your sceptred hand,  
It rolled not back when Canute gave command.



## MIRACLES.

THE people were not able of themselves to see into Christ's majesty and superhuman power. They needed some outward evidence that it really did exist. Then, when they had been assured of its reality, they could admire and reverence that nobility of mind which forbade the use of that power in self-preservation, looking upon it as a sacred trust for the use of others only.

Would not the chief beauty of Christ's life (the beauty of forgiving injuries, of reviling not again when he was reviled, of suffering all persecutions patiently, meekly, in short, of doing unto others as he would have others do to him), would not much of this beauty be lost if our belief be that Christ was powerless to ward off these persecutions, that he could not, if he would, show forth a power superior to that of any of his enemies? Above all, would not half the glory of the Cross be gone, if men had not believed that Christ could have saved himself therefrom, but would not?

Thus, it is impossible (taking into consideration the whole history of Christianity) to ever believe that Christ had the power to work miracles, but nevertheless did not work any. Still less is it possible to believe that he had not the power to perform them. The author of "Ecce Homo" says:—

"This temperance in the use of supernatural power is the masterpiece of Christ. It is a moral miracle superinduced upon a physical one. This repose in greatness makes him surely the most sublime image ever offered to the human imagination. And it is precisely this trait which gave him his immense and immediate ascendancy over men. . . . It was the combination of greatness and self-sacrifice which won their hearts, the mighty powers held under a mighty control the unspeakable condescension, the Cross of Christ. . . . The trait in Christ which filled his (Paul's) whole mind was his condescension. The charm of that condescension lay in its being voluntary. . . Christ's voluntary surrender of power is their (the apostle's) favourite subject, the humiliation implied in his whole life and crowned by his death."

## THE DYING YEAR.

As we draw towards the close of the year our minds are naturally inclined to survey the changes which have taken place during the months which have glided away. To our Unitarian Church the year has been one of peculiar trial and sorrow through the loss of many of our most valued and revered ministers. At the outset of 1869, immediately after his first Sunday service, the Rev. E. Talbot, of Tenterden, was suddenly seized with illness, and had little more than time to pray the blessing of God on his family, say farewell, and was gone. A few months after the Rev. J. J. Tayler, whose name is held in reverence by tens of thousands of human hearts, laid down his charge and passed away. A few weeks later the Rev. R. B. Aspland, whose services to our cause were inestimable, was suddenly called to his reward. The full measure of our loss was not yet come, for the Rev. T. Bishop, so well known as the friend of the poor, after a brief illness, was no more here. These are not the only losses our church has sustained, yet they are a heavy part of our trial; and if we had not faith that God, who calls us to do a work for the higher religious life of the world, will supply our want of help and repair our losses, our hearts would be faint indeed. No doubt every church and every family can tell some tale of bereavements; how the year commenced with prospects of unbroken friendships and continued life, and how this dream has been dispelled. Some who were young, with many signs of health, are now among the inhabitants of the city of the dead. And so we are taught to be modest in our hopes of what the world may be to us in the future. The year's losses are not without some gain if we have increased in wisdom, in humble hope and loving trust, and learned to set our affections on those Christian graces which will far outlive all the transient scenes of time. How thankful even amid time's ravages we ought to be that God has promised us a better country and a more enduring life. We mark and mourn the loss of those who are taken from us, yet a little time and a like sigh will be breathed over our departed life. Let young and old now lay up for that change purity and strength of character, the withering hand of time can never touch.



## WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

**THE BIBLE AS A GUIDE.**—It is a belief in the Bible, the fruits of deep meditation, which has served me as the guide of my moral and literary life. I have found it a capital safely invested, and richly productive of interest.—*Goethe.*

**WHY UNHAPPY?**—An able and intelligent Scripturalist once heard a pious woman say, "If Jesus Christ be not God, I cannot be happy." His reply was, "Yes you may, madam. You have only to learn to think as well of the Father as you do of His Son."

**CARRY YOUR COLOURS.**—Take your religion with you to the sea shore, the springs, and the mountains; retain its spirit, and in order to do this jealously maintain its forms. Too many of us are like the little girl who, at the close of her evening prayer one day, said, "Now good bye, God, good bye, Jesus Christ, I'm going to Boston to-morrow."

**THE DISCOURAGERS.**—Some men have a genius for discouragement. It matters little what is proposed—anything, from a pleasure excursion to a new railway—they are sure to meet with a stream of cold water from their full hydrant. They are the hydropaths of society, with a cold water douche for everything, a regular shower-bath for everybody who comes in their way. Beware of the man who is merely a walking-hose, spitting discouragements in everybody's path, and quenching the enthusiasm of young and ardent souls.

**A POPE'S BULL IN 1817.**—His Holiness, in 1817, issued a bull against *Bible Societies*. He said that he and his "venerable brethren, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, have been truly shocked at this most crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined," and declared his resolution to "abolish this pestilence as far as possible," "this defilement of the Faith most eminently dangerous to souls," and to "oppose the impious machinations of these innovators," the distributors of Bibles. He said it is an "episcopal duty" to expose the wickedness of this nefarious scheme. Fifty years have exposed the folly of the Pope's bull.

**ALL EQUAL HERE.**—It is related of the Duke of Wellington, that once when he remained to take the sacrament at his parish church a very poor old man had gone up the opposite aisle, and reaching the communion table, knelt down by the side of the Duke. Some one—a pew-owner, probably—came and touched the poor man on the shoulder, and whispered to him to move further away, or rise and wait until the Duke had received the bread and wine. But the eagle eye and quick ear of the great commander caught the meaning of that touch and that whisper. He clasped the old man's hand, and held him to prevent his rising, and in a reverential undertone, but most distinctly, said: "Do not move—we are all equal here."

**A GOOD MEMORY.**—The best memory is to remember that which is right. A memory that can retain expressions as seen in Scripture, as read in books, as heard in good sermons, is good; but the memory that ceases to do evil and learns to do well is the best of all. There

was an old Welsh woman who in her early days used to act wrongly towards her neighbours by giving them short measure for their money. Later, however, that woman meeting a minister of Christ, thanked him for a good sermon she had some time before heard from him. When asked about the text, it was noticed she remembered neither the text nor any portion of the sermon, and when asked what it was that she did remember, she answered, "I remembered to leave off my short measure!"

**LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.**—Towards the year 1709 a young prince spent some time with Fenelon at his palace, and in divers conversations they had together, listened to him with great veneration and docility. The Archbishop recommended to him, above all things, never to compel his subjects to change their religion. "Liberty of thought," said he to him, "is an impregnable fortress which no human power can force. Violence can never convince: it only creates hypocrites. When kings take upon them to direct in matters of religion, instead of protecting it, they bring it into bondage. You ought, therefore, to grant to all a legal toleration, not as approving all things indifferently, but suffering with patience what God suffers, and endeavouring to reconcile the misled by soft and gentle persuasion."

**AN OFFER OF VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.**—An Italian from Venice, named Edmund Angelini, made himself notorious and ridiculous by his offer to the Lord Mayor to die in place of the wretched Fauntleroy, the banker, executed at the Old Bailey, November 30, 1824, alleging that such a sacrifice would satisfy public justice. The offer was made in writing, and urged by the eccentric foreigner on the ground of Christ's dying as a substitute for sinners, to appease the wrath of the Almighty. Angelini was treated, and deserved to be treated, as a madman. But why? Because it is contrary to reason that in a case of moral responsibility one person should be taken for another; that is, esteemed to be what it is known he is not. And because it is contrary to the first principles of justice that an innocent person should, even on his own offer, be regarded and dealt with as guilty. Let the believers in the Calvinistic doctrine of atonement make the application of the story. Would they but seriously and impartially inquire, they would find their doctrine is as repugnant to Scripture as it is to every principle and feeling admitted by human beings that have emerged but one degree from barbarism.

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